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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken at College of the Canyons, in California, to determine the underlying reasons for student attrition. Questionnaires were mailed to all 2,511 students who had officially withdrawn from the college between fall 1992 and spring 1994. A total of 391 completed questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 16%. Results indicated the following: (1) respondents were 72.8% white, 56.1% female, and 93.5% were continuing students; (2) conflict between the demands of work and college was the most commonly cited major reason for withdrawing, reported by 10.4% of respondents, followed by changes in work schedules, cited by 5.8%; (3) academic and instructional reasons were a major concern for the 5.7% who indicated that course material was not clearly presented and the 5.2% who thought that courses were too time-consuming; (4) health problems, family responsibilities, post-1994 earthquake recovery, and taking a break from college were the four most common secondary or minor reasons for withdrawing; and (5) 46.3% indicated that they either had already or were planning to re-enroll, 12.8% were undecided, and 10% had decided not to re-enroll. Data tables and rankings of responses are included. Results from a field test of the survey instrument, the instrument, and student responses to open-ended questions are appended. (KP)

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ED 386 257

A Study to Determine the Reasons for Students Withdrawing From College of the Canyons for the Fall and Spring Semesters 1992-93 and 1993-94

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by

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Counselor
June, 1995

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Introduction

Each semester thousands of students withdraw from colleges, not only in California, but throughout the country. There is no question that the costs attributed to this drop in student enrollment are significant and a drain on college resources. Admissions, counseling, instruction, and auxiliary programs such as financial aid and tutoring are just a few of the services and costs devoted to each student who matriculates. In addition, the fourth and eighth week of the semester are "census weeks" and enrollment at these semester "markers" help determine the basis for state financial support.

It should also be noted that most classes are filled to capacity at the start of each semester only to end up with many empty seats prior to final exam week. This phenomenon denies admission to many qualified and highly motivated students each semester.

Thus, if a case can be made that students who drop college courses are a financial loss to the college, (and it can), it seems incumbent to determine:

1) Why students withdraw from college
2) If the reasons for withdrawal are due to institutional factors
3) If the reasons for withdrawal are beyond the control of the college.

Purpose of the study

The expressed purpose of this study was to determine the underlying reasons for student attrition at College of the Canyons between the Fall semester of 1992 and Spring semester 1994. The specific focus of this study sought answers to the following questions:

1) What are the MAJOR REASONS students withdrew from all classes?

2) What were the MINOR REASONS students withdrew from all classes?

3) What were the MOST IMPORTANT REASONS students withdrew from all classes?

4) To what extent do student who withdraw plan to return, are undecided, have already returned, or plan not to return to COC?

Procedures

Selecting the Sample and Developing a Questionnaire

The population data for this study was obtained by requesting the computer center staff to search for all names and addresses of students who had officially withdrawn from college prior to the drop deadline for the fall/spring semesters 1992-93 and 1993-94.

Initially, a random sample of the population (n=2,511) was considered for questionnaire distribution. After consulting with Dr. Nancy Mattice, Assistant Dean, Institutional Development, and Audrey Green, Matriculation Coordinator, we agreed that a mailing to the total population would help facilitate a greater number of returns. The questionnaire was to be mailed to all students who withdrew prior to the drop deadline for the fall and spring semesters 1992-93 and 1993-94.

The questionnaire was developed by analyzing various instruments used in previous withdrawal studies, including a study by ACT (American College Testing Program) and other community colleges. Several "models" were considered, reviewed, and revised. A final questionnaire was adopted, printed, and prepared for a "field test" with withdrawing students during the Fall 1994 semester.

Field Testing the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was field tested by administering it to selected students withdrawing from all classes prior to the drop deadline (October 14) for the Fall semester 1994. Students were requested to complete the survey upon reporting to a Counselor for an "exit interview" (a required procedure prior to leaving college). A total of 61 students participated. The data from the "field test" was analyzed and discussed with Dr. Mattice. Several helpful suggestions were made, including adding a third category for responses (minor reasons) and expanding re-enrollment information. Re-enrollment information added the choices "undecided" and "no, I am not planning to re-enroll." A

copy of the field test instrument is enclosed in the Appendix. A summary of student responses to the field test questionnaire is included in the Appendix section.

The finalized survey instrument separated response items into four categories: Academic, Personal, Financial and Employment. Each category offered the student an opportunity to check one or more reasons for withdrawing from school. A comment section was located at the end of each category. The total items per category were: Academic (14), Personal (12), Financial (5) and Employment (3). In addition, students were requested to check whether their reason(s) for withdrawing were: 1) a major reason, 2) a minor reason, or 3) not a reason. Finally, respondents were requested to review their MAJOR reasons for leaving college and check THE MOST IMPORTANT. The final survey question asked students to indicate if they planned to re-enroll at College of the Canyons. A copy of the questionnaire used in this study is enclosed in the Appendix.

Distributing the Questionnaire, Collecting and Analyzing the Data

2,511 questionnaires were printed, envelopes stuffed, and mailed to all withdrawn students on April 3 with a requested return by April 14, 1995. By April 14, 250 questionnaires had been returned and a final tabulation on May 1 showed a final return of 391 questionnaires for a return rate of 16%. All tabulations of questionnaires were done by hand. Responses were totaled for each respondents' choices for "reason for withdrawal" under either "major," "minor," or "not a reason" under the following categories: Academic (14 reasons), Personal (12 reasons), Financial (5 reasons), and Employment (3 reasons).

The summarized data was analyzed and ranked by the number of responses each student made to the reason(s) for withdrawing. The responses were also organized into tables showing rank order for the "major," "minor," and "most important" reasons for withdrawing. A final tabulation was done for students' responses to the question "Do you plan to re-enroll at College of the Canyons?"

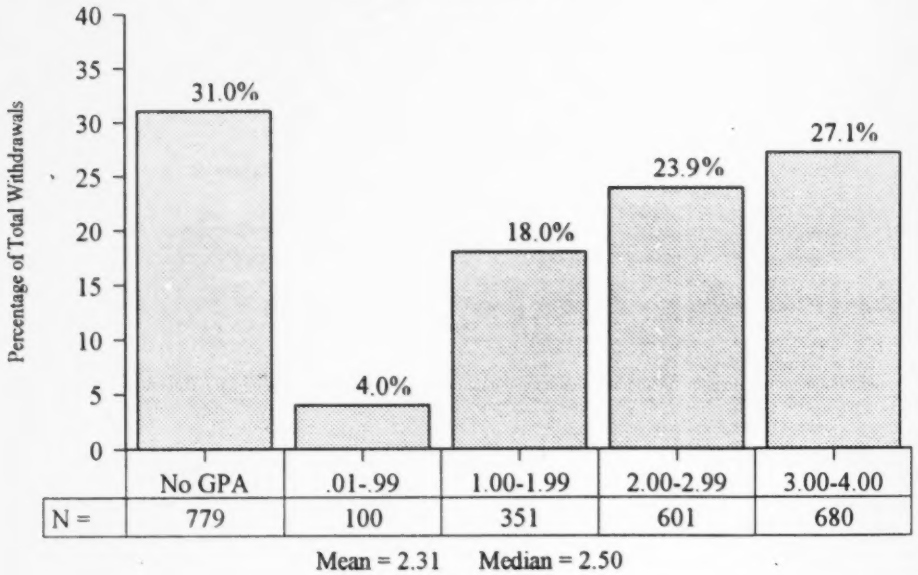
The Results

Demographic Data

The Computer Center not only generated mailing labels for the 2,511 students who withdrew from the college during the four semesters, but also produced a datafile of descriptive data about the population. The following tables provide a demographic profile of these students.

Table 1.

Cumulative Grade Point Average of Students
who Withdrew from College
1992-93 and 1993-94



	No GPA	.01-.99	1.00-1.99	2.00-2.99	3.00-4.00
N =	779	100	351	601	680

Mean = 2.31 Median = 2.50

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Table 2.

Ethnicity of Students who Withdrew from College, 1992-93 and 1993-94

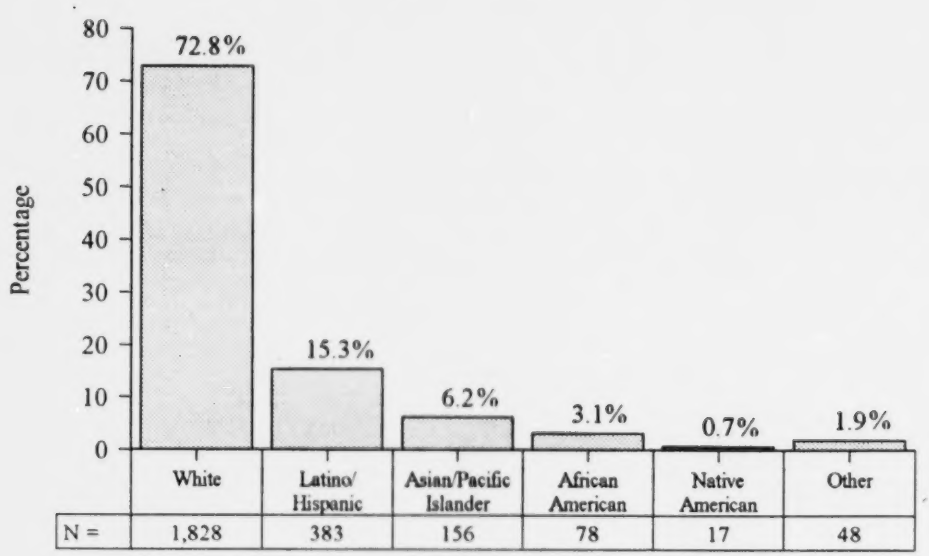

Table 3.

Gender of Students Who Withdrew from College 1992-93 and 1993-94

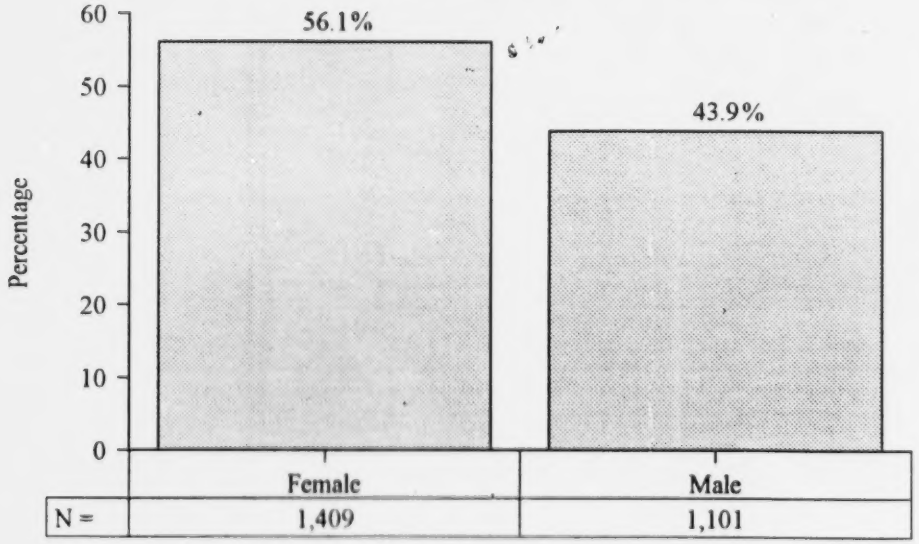

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Table 4.

Was English Primary Language of
Students who Withdrew from College
1992-93 and 1993-94

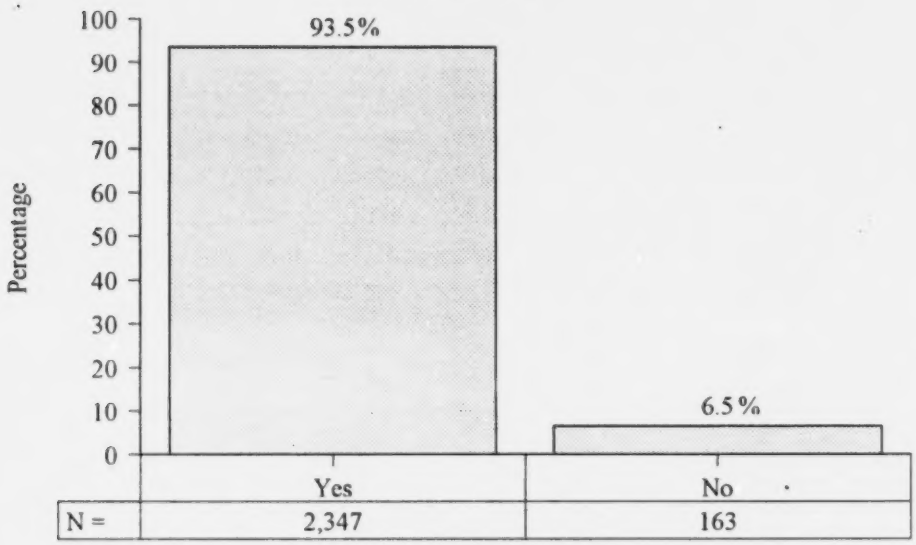

Table 5.

Enrollment Status of Students
who Withdrew from College
1992-93 and 1993-94

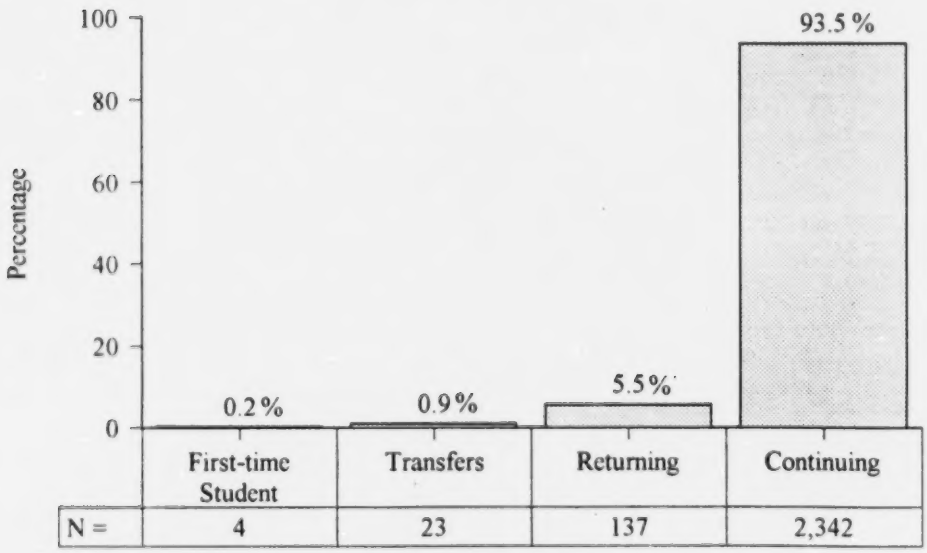

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Table 6.

Educational Status of Students
who Withdrew from College
1992-93 and 1993-94

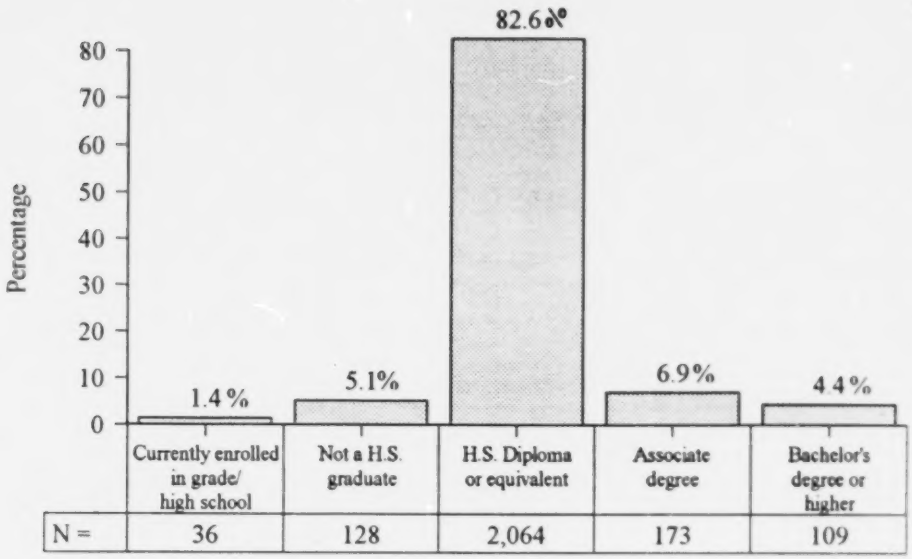

Table 7.

Educational Goal of Students
who Withdrew from College
1992-93 and 1993-94

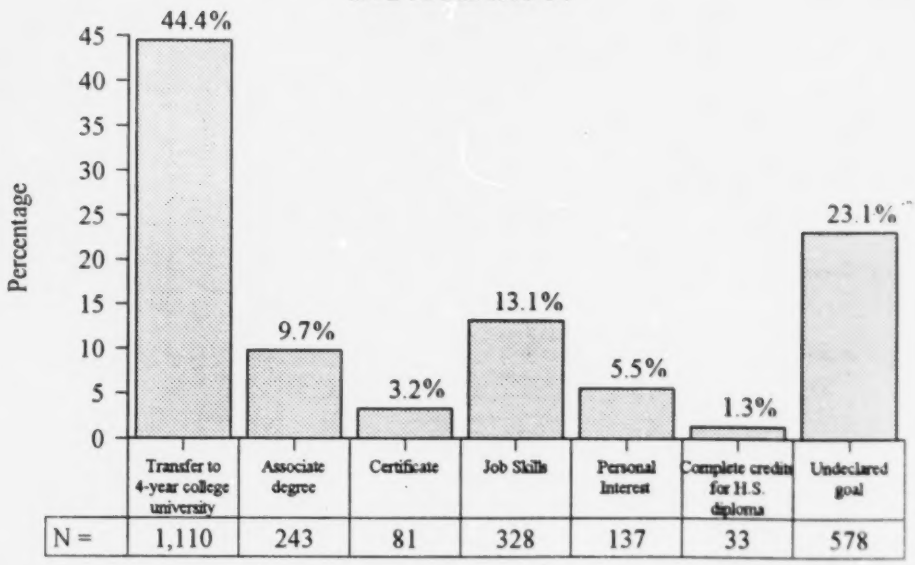

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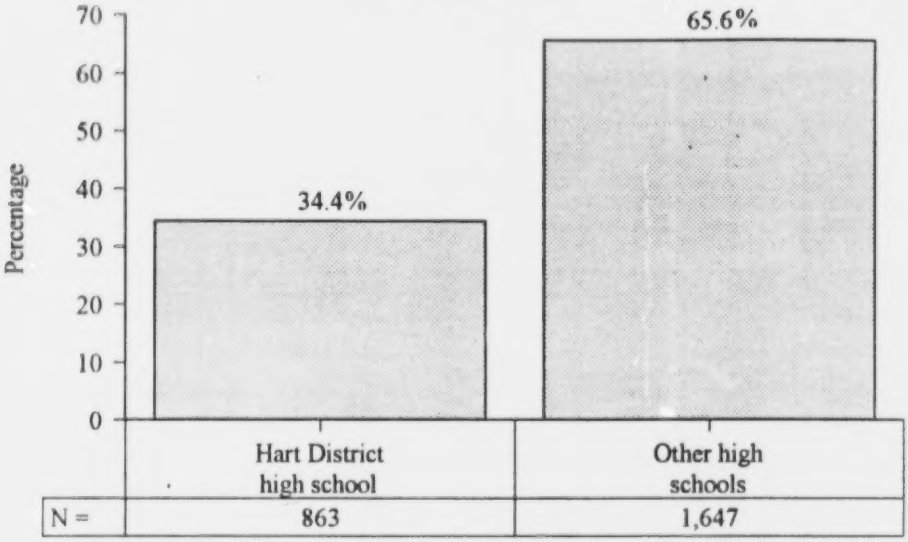
Table 8.

Last High School Attended of
Students who Withdrew from College
1992-93 and 1993-94



Major Reasons for Withdrawal

It is estimated that over 50% of community college students are employed at least twenty hours per week. It is not surprising, then, that the two most popular major reasons for withdrawing were "Conflict between demands of job and college" (10.4%) and "Change in work schedule" (5.8%). Academics were a major concern for 69 respondents (5.7%) who checked "Course material not clearly presented" and "Courses too time-consuming" (5.2%). It could be possible that "Courses too time-consuming" is also job-related. In my counseling interviews, students often indicate there is a distinct conflict between the amount of hours worked and the "unit load" carried. The fourth-ranked major reason for 64 students was Personal, and for "Health-related problems" (5.3%). A complete listing of the major reasons can be seen in Table 1.

Minor Reasons for Withdrawal

Four personal reasons were given priority as a secondary or "minor reason" for leaving college. Four of the five ranking reasons included: "Family/responsibilities too excessive/costly" (10.2%), "Wanted a break from college" (6.7%), "Earthquake-related problems" (5.4%), and "Lacked personal/emotional support" (4.5%). The remaining non-personal minor reason was "Enrolled in more units that I could handle" (ranked third - 5.6%). The ranked minor reasons can be seen in Table 2.

Most Important Reason for Withdrawal

Respondents were requested, after checking both major and minor reasons, to further review their choices and mark the **Most Important** reason for leaving COC. Employment-related reasons (as in Major Reasons) ranked first and third. They were "Conflict between demands of job and college" (n=36) and "Change in work schedule" (n=14) respectively. "Health-related problems" (#2),

"Pregnancy/childbirth (#4) and "Family/responsibilities too excessive or costly" (#5) rounded out the top five reasons. A complete listing of the Most Important Reasons for leaving college may be seen in Table 3.

Major and Minor Results Combined

When both major and minor reasons are combined, three of the five highest ranked reasons are all personal-related. "Family responsibilities too excessive/costly" (n=158), "Wanted a break from college (n=121), and "Earthquake-related problems" (n=114) ranked one through three. "Conflict between demands of job and college" (n=107) and "Courses were too time consuming" (n=107) tied for fourth. "Change in work schedule" (n=99) was ranked fifth. A list of ranked major and minor reasons can be seen in Table 4.

Re-enrollment Data

69% of the respondents reported their plans concerning re-enrollment. The data reveals that almost half (46.3%) said they either had already re-enrolled or planned to. 50 former students were undecided about returning (12.8%) and 39 (10.0%) indicated they did not plan to return. The total analysis for re-enrollment information is summarized in Table 5.

Respondents' Comments

The anonymity of respondents was probably a contributing factor for the plethora of comments submitted. A total of 268 comments were received relating to a wide range of problems, and in many cases, very personal issues. Although respondents were asked to comment under each category (i.e., Academic, Personal, Financial, Employment), the comments transcended these

guidelines. For example, under "comments" for Academic Reasons the results were related to: personal (18), health (7), earthquake (5), graduated (2), moved (3), and transferred to another school (5). The comments under Personal Reasons related to: personal (37), moved (3), finances (1), health (6), earthquake (15) and transferred to another school (6). The implications from respondents' comments will be further discussed in Conclusions and Recommendations. A complete summary of comments (by category) can be seen in Table 6. A listing of representative comments are included in the Appendix.

Table 1.

Composite Ranking of the Major Reasons for Withdrawal
(by Total Responses)

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Conflict between demands of job and college	Employment	1	126	10.4%
Change in work schedule	Employment	2	71	5.8
Course material not clearly presented	Academic	3	69	5.7
Health-related problems	Personal	4	64	5.3
Course(s) were too time consuming	Academic	5	63	5.2
Lack of academic advisement	Academic	6	55	4.5
Earthquake-related problems	Personal	6	55	4.5
Course(s) taught too fast/could not keep up	Academic	7	54	4.4
Wanted a break from college	Personal	8	52	4.3
Family responsibilities too excessive/costly	Personal	9	51	4.2
Accepted full-time job	Employment	10	47	3.9
Disappointed with quality of instruction	Academic	11	46	3.8
Class scheduling problems	Academic	12	45	3.7
Desired a major which was not offered	Academic	13	44	3.6
Lacked educational/career goal	Academic	14	39	3.2
Lacked necessary academic skills/prep.	Academic	15	33	2.7
Enrolled in more units than I could handle	Academic	15	33	2.7
Inadequate study habits	Academic	15	33	2.7
Attended another college	Personal	16	32	2.6
Fees more than I could afford	Financial	17	31	2.6
Encountered unexpected expenses	Financial	18	27	2.2
Pregnancy/childbirth	Personal	19	25	2.1
Was behind in classes	Academic	20	19	1.6
Lacked personal/emotional support	Personal	20	19	1.6
College did not meet my expectations	Personal	20	19	1.6

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Child care not available/too costly	Personal	21	14	1.2
Did not budget money correctly	Financial	22	11	0.9
Applied for financial aid, none granted	Financial	22	11	0.9
Financial aid received was inadequate	Financial	23	9	0.7
Transportation difficulties	Personal	24	6	0.5
Textbooks too difficult to comprehend	Academic	25	4	0.3
Inadequate facilities for the physically handicapped	Personal	25	4	0.3
Felt racial/ethnic tension	Personal	25	4	0.3

Table 2.

Composite Ranking of the Minor Reasons for Withdrawal
(by Total Responses)

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Family/responsibilities too excessive/costly	Personal	1	105	10.2%
Wanted a break from college	Personal	2	69	6.7
Enrolled in more units than I could handle	Academic	3	58	5.6
Earthquake-related problems	Personal	4	56	5.4
Lacked personal/emotional support	Personal	5	46	4.5
Course(s) were too time consuming	Academic	6	44	4.3
Class scheduling problems	Academic	6	44	4.5
Inadequate study habits	Academic	6	44	4.5
Conflict between demands of job and college	Employment	7	41	4.0
Was behind in classes	Academic	8	39	3.8
Encountered unexpected expenses	Financial	9	38	3.7
Courses taught too fast - could not keep up	Academic	10	36	3.5
Disappointed with quality of instruction	Academic	10	36	3.5
Lack of academic advisement	Academic	11	33	3.2
Textbooks too difficult to comprehend	Academic	12	31	3.0
Attended another college	Personal	13	30	2.9
Health-related problems	Personal	14	29	2.8
Change in work schedule	Employment	15	28	2.7
Course material not clearly presented	Academic	16	27	2.6
Accepted a full-time job	Employment	17	24	2.3
Fees more than I could afford	Financial	18	23	2.2
Lacked necessary academic skills/preparation	Academic	19	22	2.1
Child care not available/too costly	Personal	19	22	2.1
College did not meet expectations	Personal	20	21	2.0
Did not budget money correctly	Financial	20	21	2.0

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Transportation difficulties	Personal	21	17	1.6
Desired a major that was not offered	Academic	22	12	1.2
Inadequate English language skills/English not primary language	Academic	23	10	1.0
Pregnancy/childbirth	Personal	24	9	0.9
Applied for financial aid, none granted	Financial	25	7	0.7
Felt racial/ethnic tension	Personal	26	5	0.5
Financial aid was inadequate	Financial	27	4	0.4
Inadequate facilities for the physically handicapped	Personal	28	2	0.2

Table 3.

Composite Ranking of the *Most Important* Reasons for Withdrawal
(by Total Responses)

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Conflict between demands of job and college	Employment	1	36	14.5%
Health-related problems (family or personal)	Personal	2	24	9.7
Change in work schedule	Employment	3	14	5.6
Pregnancy/childbirth	Personal	4	13	5.2
Family/responsibilities too excessive/costly	Personal	5	12	4.8
Lacked educational/career goal	Academic	6	11	4.4
Course(s) taught too fast/could not keep up	Academic	7	10	4.0
Disappointed with quality of instruction	Academic	7	10	4.0
Lack of academic advisement	Academic	8	9	3.6
Class scheduling problem	Academic	9	8	3.2
Encountered unexpected expenses	Financial	9	8	3.2
Was behind in classes	Academic	10	7	2.8
Course material not clearly presented	Academic	10	7	2.8
Inadequate study habits	Academic	10	7	2.8
Attended another college	Personal	10	7	2.8
Fees more then I could afford	Financial	10	7	2.8
Accepted a full-time job	Employment	11	6	2.4
Child care not available/too costly	Personal	12	5	2.0
Transportation difficulties	Personal	12	5	2.0
Enrolled in more units than I can handle	Academic	13	4	1.6
Course(s) were too time consuming	Academic	13	4	1.6
Desired a major that was not offered	Academic	13	4	1.6
Lacked personal/emotional support	Personal	13	4	1.6
College did not meet my expectations	Personal	13	4	1.6
Wanted a break from college	Personal	13	4	1.6
Lacked necessary academic skills/preparation	Academic	14	3	1.2

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Did not budget money correctly	Financial	14	3	1.5
Textbooks too difficult to comprehend	Academic	15	2	0.8
Earthquake-related problems	Personal	15	2	0.8
Felt racial/ethnic tension	Personal	15	2	0.8
Applied for financial aid, none granted	Financial	15	2	0.8
Financial aid received was inadequate	Financial	15	2	0.8
Inadequate English language skills/English not primary language	Academic	16	1	0.4
Inadequate facilities for the physically handicapped	Personal	16	1	0.4

Table 4.

Rank Order for Withdrawal From College For Either a Major or Minor Reason

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Family/responsibilities too excessive/costly	Personal	1	158	7.1%
Wanted a break from college	Personal	2	121	5.4
Earthquake-related problems	Personal	3	114	5.1
Courses were too time consuming	Academic	4	107	4.8
Conflict between demands of job and college	Employment	4	107	4.8
Change in work schedule	Employment	5	99	4.5
Class scheduling problems	Academic	6	98	4.4
Course material not clearly presented	Academic	7	96	4.3
Health-related problems	Personal	8	93	4.2
Enrolled in more units then I could handle	Academic	9	91	4.1
Course(s) taught too fast/could not keep up	Academic	10	90	4.1
Disappointed with quality of instruction	Academic	11	82	3.7
Inadequate study habits	Academic	12	77	3.5
Accepted full-time job	Employment	13	72	3.2
Lack of academic advisement	Academic	14	68	3.1
Lacked educational/career goal	Academic	15	66	3.0
Attended another college	Personal	15	66	3.0
Lacked personal/emotional support	Personal	16	65	3.0
Encountered unexpected expenses	Financial	16	65	3.0
Was behind in classes	Academic	17	58	2.6
Lacked necessary academic skills/preparation	Academic	18	56	2.6
Desired a major not offered	Academic	18	56	2.6
Fees more then I could afford	Financial	19	54	2.4
College did not meet my expectations	Personal	20	40	1.8
Child care not available/too costly	Personal	21	36	1.6
Textbooks too difficult to comprehend	Academic	22	35	1.6

Reason	Category	Rank	N	Percent
Pregnancy/childbirth	Personal	22	34	1.6
Did not budget money correctly	Financial	23	32	1.4
Transportation difficulties	Personal	24	26	1.2
Applied for financial aid, none granted	Financial	25	18	0.8
Inadequate English language skills/English not primary language	Academic	26	14	0.6
Financial aid received as inadequate	Financial	27	13	0.6
Felt racial/ethnic tensions	Personal	28	9	0.4
Inadequate facilities for the physically handicapped	Personal	29	6	0.3

Table 5.

Do you Plan to Re-enroll at College of the Canyons?

Response	Number	Percent
Yes, I plan to re-enroll	108	27.6%
Yes, already re-enrolled	73	18.7
Undecided	50	12.8
No	39	10.0
No Response	121	30.9
TOTAL:	391	100.0%

Table 6.

Summary of Respondents' Comments
(by Category)

Category	Number	Percent
Academic	39	57.4
Personal	68	25.4
Financial	22	8.2
Employment	23	8.6
Re-enrollment	116	43.3
TOTAL:	268	100.0

Table 7.

Student Rate of Withdrawal

(by semester)

Semester	Enrolled*	# Withdrew	%
Fall 1992	6,362	685	10.8%
Spring 1993	6,394	689	10.7
Fall 1993	6,226	535	8.6
Spring 1994	5,522	601	10.9
TOTAL:	24,504	2,510	10.2%

* 1st Census Week

Discussion:

College of the Canyons had a total of 2,510 students "officially" withdraw (prior to drop deadline) from college for the fall/spring semesters 1992-94. In addition, unsubstantiated numbers were dropped by instructors for being "no shows" (never reporting to classes). The drop rate for "official drops" was an average of 10.2% for the four semesters. This calculation was arrived at by dividing the number of students who withdrew by total attendance at the first census week (third Monday of the semester - refer to Table 7). A variety of facilities, programs and services are available to help students stay in college. These include, but are not limited to, counseling, tutoring, financial aid, Extended Opportunities Program and Services (EOPS), and Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS). A highly competent and dedicated faculty provide the academic challenges students seek and college facilities are more than adequate. Then why do students leave? Do significant numbers of students leave for reasons beyond the control of the college or does the college play a role in their departure? Or is it a combination of both contributing to this phenomenon?

The results of this study clearly indicate that the reasons students withdrew are as diverse as the students themselves. The primary reasons were centered on work-related issues, academics, health problems (including pregnancy/childbirth), and family responsibilities, and the Northridge earthquake (January 1994).

When students were asked to check both the major reason and the most important reason for withdrawing, "Conflict between demands of job and college" and "Change in work schedule" ranked at the top. In addition, "Conflict between demands of job and college" received more responses (36) then any other reason when students were asked to review their major reason for withdrawing and check the most important one.

Academic-related reasons for leaving college received more total responses (973) then any other category. Of this total, 537 responses were made for major reasons and 436 for minor reasons. "Course material not clearly presented," "Courses too time-consuming" (work related?), and "Lacked academic advisement" were the three ranking major reasons selected by respondents. The meaning of what students meant to convey by choosing the reason "course material not clearly presented" is not clear. This will be discussed further in the section on Conclusions and Recommendations.

The third category which received a significant number of responses from students was "Personal Reasons." "Health-related problems (family or personal)," "Family/responsibilities too

excessive costly" (work related?), "Earthquake-related problems," and "Wanted a break from college" all ranked near or at the top of the final summaries. A total of 756 student responses were checked for the 12 reasons in this category. This category also received more personal comments (68) then any other category (see Table 7).

It was somewhat surprising that financial reasons did not receive a higher priority from respondents. Only 182 total responses were checked for both a major and minor reason for withdrawing from college. Financial reasons did not receive a high ranking by students for either a major or minor reason, or when these categories were combined. There were a significant number of comments about increased fees for students holding bachelors degrees but none about fees in general. "Fees more than I can afford" received a total of 44 responses.

Respondents seemed to be enthusiastic in offering explanations and clarification about why they withdrew from college. Comments were both critical and complimentary about the college, its programs, and services. The majority of comments (68) were of a personal nature and related to such issues as health, family, work, and the trauma of the Northridge earthquake.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Credibility, meaning, and implications are strained in any study which has only a 16% return of the data. The results of this study, limited as they are, lead to certain clear conclusions yet also reveal some conclusions which would benefit from further study.

The conclusions are:

1. The major reasons students withdrew from College of the Canyons were wide-ranging and diverse. It appears that the majority of these reasons (employment, personal, financial) are outside the control of the college.

2. Conflicts between the demands of work and college was the most prominent single major reason students withdrew from college.

3. Academic/instructional reasons, when viewed individually, were of secondary importance to employment, but when considered as an entire category (13 reasons), they exceeded all other reasons for withdrawing.

4. The reasons students withdraw are inter-related, and in many cases, difficult to separate. Examples are: "courses too time-consuming" (employment), "lacked education/career goal" (lack of academic advisement), "enrolled in more units than I could handle" (employment) "behind in classes" (inadequate study habits).

5. Instructional/academic reasons for withdrawal were of enough significance to warrant further study. Scheduling problems, courses taught too fast or unclearly, and disappointment with instruction, were all selected reasons. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine what respondents were trying to say here. It is for that reason this category is discussed further in Recommendations.

6. Personal reasons which involve life circumstances beyond the control of the student (and college) account for a significant number of withdrawals from college. Health problems (including pregnancy/childbirth), family responsibilities, post-earthquake recovery, and just "taking a break from college" were of rank importance. This category received more personal comments then any other category (68).

The following recommendations are made:

1. Develop a recruiting plan for facilitating the return of students who withdraw. 41% (n=158) of the respondents said they were either going to enroll in the future or were "undecided." When these statistics are extrapolated from the total population of this study (n=2,511), the target population for recruitment is over one thousand potential students!

2. Facilitate the re-enrollment of the returning students by easing registration procedures. A soon-to-be-implemented phone registration system will help.

3. Develop and implement a withdrawal questionnaire. Students leaving college would tell us: 1) why they are leaving, 2) what services they used or didn't use, 3) an evaluation of

services used, 4) if they would like information (i.e., registration details) mailed to them, and 5) how they rate College of the Canyons in general.

4. Give further study to determine the casual relationship between instructional-related factors and students withdrawing from college. The responses from students about instruction-centered problems was significant enough in numbers (224) to warrant a second look in this area.

5. Examine ways to develop creative scheduling of classes to accommodate fully-employed students. Expanded College by Television and a "Saturday college" could be possibilities in this area of need.

6. Strengthen counseling services to serve the students who enter college and lack a career or college goal. A third of the respondents in this study (34%) pointed to "lack of career/educational goal" and "lacked educational advisement" as their reason for leaving college. Studies show that an effective advisement program can improve retention when offered with a competent and caring faculty.

Appendix:

Field Test Questionnaire/Results

Survey Questionnaire

Student Comments

College of the Canyons
Withdrawal Survey

Dear Student:

You can be of immense service to College of the Canyons by taking a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. The purpose of this survey is to determine **why students withdraw from college**. Our records show that you withdrew from all your classes during the period of our survey (1992-94). We are asking you to tell us the reasons you withdrew, including **the most important reason**.

This survey is confidential and your responses are anonymous. We would appreciate your honesty and welcome any comments and/or suggestions you may wish to include.

REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE

Listed below are "suggested" reasons why a student might leave college. Please respond to each item by checking (✓) whether each of the reasons listed was a **MAJOR REASON** a **MINOR REASON** or **NOT A REASON** in your decision to leave college.

ACADEMIC REASONS	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Lacked necessary academic skills/preparation	_____	_____	_____
Inadequate English language skills/English not primary language	_____	_____	_____
Was behind in classes	_____	_____	_____
Course material not clearly presented	_____	_____	_____
Course(s) taught too fast/could not keep up	_____	_____	_____
Enrolled in more units than I could handle	_____	_____	_____
Course(s) were too time consuming	_____	_____	_____
Textbooks too difficult to comprehend	_____	_____	_____
Lacked educational/career goal	_____	_____	_____
Inadequate study habits	_____	_____	_____
Disappointed with quality of instruction	_____	_____	_____
Desired a major which was not offered	_____	_____	_____
Class scheduling problems	_____	_____	_____
Lack of academic advisement	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

PERSONAL REASONS	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Attended another college	_____	_____	_____
Health-related problems (family or personal)	_____	_____	_____
Wanted a break from college	_____	_____	_____
Earthquake-related problems	_____	_____	_____
Child care not available/too costly	_____	_____	_____
Pregnancy/childbirth	_____	_____	_____
Family/responsibilities too excessive/costly	_____	_____	_____

(continued on reverse side)

PERSONAL REASONS (continued)	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Lacked personal/emotional support	_____	_____	_____
Transportation difficulties	_____	_____	_____
College did not meet my expectations	_____	_____	_____
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	_____	_____	_____
Felt racial/ethnic tension	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

FINANCIAL REASONS	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Did not budget money correctly	_____	_____	_____
Encountered unexpected expenses	_____	_____	_____
Applied for financial aid, none granted	_____	_____	_____
Financial aid received was inadequate	_____	_____	_____
Fees more than I could afford	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

EMPLOYMENT REASONS	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Conflict between demands of job and college	_____	_____	_____
Change in work schedule	_____	_____	_____
Accepted full-time job	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

Please re-examine your major reasons for leaving this college. Indicate the **MOST IMPORTANT REASON** by placing a **SECOND CHECK** (✓✓) on the line following that item.

Do you plan to re-enroll at College of the Canyons?

_____ Yes, I have already re-enrolled.
_____ Yes, I plan to re-enroll in the future
_____ Undecided
_____ No

Comment _____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return your survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by April 14, 1995
or return to:

Dr. Robert Gilmore, Counselor
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Field Test Results of Questionnaire

Major Reasons

	Number	Percent
Academic (n=74)		
Courses too time consuming	12	16.2
Behind in classes	11	14.9
Inadequate study habits	8	10.8
Disappointed with instruction	8	10.8
Course material not clearly presented	6	8.1
Courses taught too fast	6	8.1
Enrolled in too many units	7	9.5
Scheduling problems	6	8.1
Desired major not offered	3	4.1
Lacked goal	3	4.1
Textbooks too difficult to understand	2	2.7
Lacked academic skills/preparation	2	2.7
Personal (n=36)		
Health related	9	25.0
Break from college	6	16.7
Family responsibilities	5	13.9
Attending another college	4	11.1
Relocated	4	11.1
Lacked personal support	4	11.1
Transportation	2	5.6
Pregnancy	1	2.8
College did not meet expectations	1	2.8
Financial (n=17)		
Unexpected expenses	10	58.8
Did not budget money	4	23.5
Fees	3	17.6
Employment (n=71)		
Conflict with job	31	43.7
Change in work schedule	23	32.4
Accepted full-time job	17	23.9

Minor Reasons

	Number	Percent
Academic (n=70)		
Class scheduling	8	11.4
Courses taught too fast	8	11.4
Behind in classes	7	10.0
Lacked necessary skills	6	8.6
Inadequate study habits	6	8.6
Major not offered	5	7.1
Lacked educational goal	5	7.1
Inadequate English skills	5	7.1
Course material not clear	4	5.7
Enrolled in too many units	4	5.7
Courses too time consuming	4	5.7
Disappointed with instructor	4	5.7
Lack of academic advisement	4	5.7
Personal (n=67)		
Health	6	9.0
Child care	6	9.0
Pregnancy	6	9.0
Family responsibilities	6	9.0
Attended another college	5	7.4
Break from college	5	7.4
Earthquake	5	7.4
Lacked emotional support	5	7.4
Transportation	5	7.4
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped	5	7.4
Racial tension	5	7.4
College didn't meet my expectations	4	6.0
Relocated	4	6.0
Financial (n=24)		
Financial aid inadequate	6	25.0
Didn't budget money	5	20.8
Applied for Financial Aid not received	5	20.8
Fees too much	4	16.7
Encountered unexpected expenses	4	16.7

Employment (Minor) (n=6)

Conflict between job and college	2	33.3
Change in work schedule	2	33.3
Accepted full-time job	2	33.3

Most Important Reasons
(Field Test)

	Number	Percent
Academic		
Class schedule	3	25.0
Dissatisfied with instructor	3	25.0
Courses too fast	2	16.7
Behind in work	2	16.7
Lacked skills	1	8.3
Inadequate study habits	1	8.3
Personal		
Relocated	3	33.3
Health	2	22.2
Needed a break	2	22.2
College didn't meet expectations	2	22.2
Financial		
NONE REPORTED		
Employment		
Conflict between school and job	9	64.3
Change in work schedule	3	21.4
Accepted full-time job	2	14.3
Plan to Re-enroll		
Already have	7	16.7
Plan to	23	54.8
Undecided	3	7.1
No	9	21.4

College of the Canyons
Withdrawal Survey

Dear Student:

You can be of immense service to College of the Canyons by taking a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. The purpose of this survey is to determine **why students withdraw from college**. Our records show that you withdrew from all your classes during the period of our survey (1992-94). We are asking you to tell us the reasons you withdrew, including **the most important reason**.

This survey is confidential and your responses are anonymous. We would appreciate your honesty and welcome any comments and/or suggestions you may wish to include.

REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE

Listed below are "suggested" reasons why a student might leave college. Please respond to each item by checking (✓) whether each of the reasons listed was a **MAJOR REASON** a **MINOR REASON or NOT A REASON** in your decision to leave college.

ACADEMIC REASONS	**MAJOR REASON**	**MINOR REASON**	**NOT A REASON**
Lacked necessary academic skills/preparation	_____	_____	_____
Inadequate English language skills/English not primary language	_____	_____	_____
Was behind in classes	_____	_____	_____
Course material not clearly presented	_____	_____	_____
Course(s) taught too fast/could not keep up	_____	_____	_____
Enrolled in more units than I could handle	_____	_____	_____
Course(s) were too time consuming	_____	_____	_____
Textbooks too difficult to comprehend	_____	_____	_____
Lacked educational/career goal	_____	_____	_____
Inadequate study habits	_____	_____	_____
Disappointed with quality of instruction	_____	_____	_____
Desired a major which was not offered	_____	_____	_____
Class scheduling problems	_____	_____	_____
Lack of academic advisement	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

PERSONAL REASONS	**MAJOR REASON**	**MINOR REASON**	**NOT A REASON**
Attended another college	_____	_____	_____
Health-related problems (family or personal)	_____	_____	_____
Wanted a break from college	_____	_____	_____
Earthquake-related problems	_____	_____	_____
Child care not available/too costly	_____	_____	_____
Pregnancy/childbirth	_____	_____	_____
Family/responsibilities too excessive/costly	_____	_____	_____

(continued on reverse side)

PERSONAL REASONS (continued)	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Lacked personal/emotional support	_____	_____	_____
Transportation difficulties	_____	_____	_____
College did not meet my expectations	_____	_____	_____
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	_____	_____	_____
Felt racial/ethnic tension	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

FINANCIAL REASONS	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Did not budget money correctly	_____	_____	_____
Encountered unexpected expenses	_____	_____	_____
Applied for financial aid, none granted	_____	_____	_____
Financial aid received was inadequate	_____	_____	_____
Fees more than I could afford	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

EMPLOYMENT REASONS	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
Conflict between demands of job and college	_____	_____	_____
Change in work schedule	_____	_____	_____
Accepted full-time job	_____	_____	_____

Other/Comment _____

_____

_____

Please re-examine your major reasons for leaving this college. Indicate the **MOST IMPORTANT REASON** by placing a **SECOND CHECK** (✓✓) on the line following that item.

Do you plan to re-enroll at College of the Canyons?

_____ Yes, I have already re-enrolled.
_____ Yes, I plan to re-enroll in the future
_____ Undecided
_____ No

Comment _____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return your survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by April 14, 1995
or return to:

Dr. Robert Gilmore, Counselor
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

STUDENTS COMMENTS

NOTE: A total of 268 comments were submitted by students. The selected comments that follow are an attempt to present an accurate representation of these comments.

Academic Comments

- Course material not clearly presented.
- Courses taught too fast/could not keep up
- Behind in classes
- My class should have had more prerequisites
- Career change
- Too much material in course; plus had to keep up with 8-10 M-F job and family
- Lack of pre-algebra classes at night left me unprepared for algebra 1 after many years absence from math class. I got behind unintentionally.
- Not enough computers in classroom for number of students
- Classes only offered every other semester
- Waiting to get classes, then finding them closed
- No math tutoring. Not available after business hours and on weekends
- I haven't decided what degree I want to pursue. I love COC, it's a wonderful school
- Should have more night courses. May want to try golf class during spring or summer
- I felt the instructor was not concerned with the entire class. Too many students, not enough equipment
- Course contents (Financial Management) was not what I was looking for
- Couldn't get the class I wanted
- Disappointed with instructor. Teacher didn't teach, I didn't learn
- Classes I needed were not offered or not when I could get there working full-time

Financial Comments

- Too expensive
- I needed to carpool and class too expensive
- Too high cost for each unit
- School was soaking up my money on GE classes - I passed History and English, etc., in high school. Why waste my time with it again
- Tuition and books are too expensive
- Book major cost; could not afford

- When tuition and books are just too high for some to go to school
- I was charged too much extra because I have a four-year degree
- It cost me too much for the special studies
- Too high fees for student who has Bachelors
- College became too expensive
- Price of units went up instead of down
- I dropped classes because the books necessary for the course were too costly

Personal Comments

- Lacked educational/career goal
- Parking is terrible. Please examine the lighting on campus
- Unsafe campus
- COC is a very good community college. I decided to enroll in an intensive engineering program at UCLA
- I read about a lot of problems in the parking lot and on campus at night
- Good school, received financial aid, obtained associates degree
- COC good school; not enough energy to handle high stress and school
- Was unemployed with family; couldn't concentrate
- Lacked motivation. I didn't know what I wanted in school
- My husband had a problem Had to go back to work
- Blatant discrimination by the California Community College against a group of Californian taxpayers who have earned a Bachelor/advanced degree
- I got married and dropped out of classes
- Divorce
- The students at COC made me feel that I didn't belong. A non-white person. I had a lot of bad looks at me
- Personal, family responsibilities did not allow any time
- I burned out on school
- I decided to take a year off and work
- Became too drained to do everything

- Divorce
- Too much. Attended school, working almost full-time, single parent with 3 children, and keeping up a home

Employment Comments

- Fatigue from a heavy work schedule made keeping up with a challenging course very difficult
- Had to work. Class not flexible with hours
- Change in work schedules after registration
- Had to work two full-time jobs; had no transportation
- New job too demanding
- Have to work to make ends meet. Work full-time
- Started new job, no more time
- Went back to work full-time
- When I signed up I was working part-time, then I had to work full-time, and school was too much
- Work full-time in a demanding job, also in car accident
- Conflicting work schedules
- Job too demanding
- Wanted a break to look for a full-time job. I plan to come back
- I was no longer eligible for exemption because I found some work

Health Comments

- Had a baby Spring 95
- Could not keep up the pace in art classes due to physical limitations
- Had an operation; had to drop
- Physical disability
- Had a nervous break-down
- Had emergency surgery and class too difficult
- Major illness in family, had to withdraw and take care
- I withdrew; father has cancer
- Mother diagnosed with catastrophic illness

- Family illness
- My son had surgery
- I have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit disorder